

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 through 20 remain in this application. Claims 21 through 34 are currently withdrawn due to a restriction requirement.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1 through 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,952,680 to Melby et al. (the Melby reference). However, the Office Action failed to provide for a prima facie case showing that the claims are obvious over the Melby reference.

Independent Claim 1 and dependent claims 2 through 19

Independent claim 1 states, “assigning system-readable identification to an asset item of a communication network; receiving, at a physical asset manager, said system-readable identification of the asset item in response to installing the asset item in the communication network; and creating an informational link between an on-line sub-object of the asset item and an off-line sub-object of the asset item, wherein said system-readable identification enables the physical asset manager to create the informational link between the on-line sub-object of the asset item and the off-line sub-object of the asset item.” The present invention provides for an integral management viewpoint covering on-line and off-line asset items. As explained in the specification on page 20, line 17 through page 24, line 24, an off line sub-object includes attributes such as unit price, purchase date, etc. typical of an inventory management system for off line asset items. The on-line sub-object includes attributes such as operational state and availability status relevant to a network management system of installed asset items. One or more of the common object attributes, such as part number (PN) and serial number (SN) in one embodiment, provide an information link that binds the two sub-objects from the on-line data model and the off-line data model.

The Office Action admits that the Melby reference fails to disclose on-line or off-line sub-objects of an asset item on page 3, line 1. However, it states that “to have further provided an on-line and off-line informational link between the two would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.” Applicants respectfully disagree with this statement. As explained in the specification on page 1, lines 18 through 25, in conventional network management systems,

two separate physical equipment inventory management applications are used for providing network equipment inventory management capability. A first physical equipment inventory management application is used for managing on-line network equipment and a second physical equipment inventory management application is used for managing off-line network equipment.” The present invention realizes the shortcomings of the conventional network management systems and provides for an integral management viewpoint covering on-line and off-line asset items. For example, in the embodiment in claim 1, the present invention includes a physical asset manager to create an informational link between the on-line sub-object of the asset item and the off-line sub-object of the asset item.

Furthermore, the Melby reference is not prior art to the present invention. The Melby reference was filed on October 2000, and claims priority as a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 09/441,289 filed Nov. 16, 1999, U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/166,042 filed Nov. 17, 1999, U.S. application Ser. No. 09/503,671 filed Feb. 14, 2000, U.S. application Ser. No. 09/504,000 filed Feb. 14, 2000, U.S. application Ser. No. 09/504,343 filed Feb. 14, 2000, and U.S. application Ser. No. 09/653,735 filed September 1, 2000, and provisional application No. 60/166,042 filed on November 17, 1999. Since Applicants can not view these prior parent applications or provisional, it is not clear if the Melby patent is entitled to claim the benefit of these earlier filings. However, in order to avoid any question of prior inventorship, Applicants are submitting an affidavit under 37 C.F.R. 1.131, showing prior inventorship to the filing of the earliest possible parent application on November 16, 1999. Please see the attached Declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.131.

#### Independent Claim 20

Independent Claim 20 requires assigning a serial number and a part number to an asset item of a communication network, wherein the serial number and the part number are electronically stored on an electronic element of the asset; receiving, at a physical asset manager, the serial number and the part number of the asset item to a physical asset manager in response to installing the asset item in the communication network; performing an informational binding operation for associating information retrievable from an on-line persistent asset database with

corresponding information retrievable from an off-line asset inventory database, wherein said system-readable identification enables the physical asset manager to create an informational link between the on-line sub-object of the asset item and the off-line sub-object of the asset item; enabling the display of a physical asset management view of an object corresponding to the asset item in response to creating the informational link, wherein the on-line sub-object of the asset item and the off-line sub-object of the asset item are capable of being integrally viewed in the physical asset management view; and preparing network planning information after creating the informational link.

The Office Action admits that the Melby reference fails to disclose on-line or off-line sub-objects of an asset item on page 3, line 1. However, it states that “to have further provided an on-line and off-line informational link between the two would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.” Applicants respectfully disagree with this statement. As explained in the specification on page 1, lines 18 through 25, in conventional network management systems, two separate physical equipment inventory management applications are used for providing network equipment inventory management capability. A first physical equipment inventory management application is used for managing on-line network equipment and a second physical equipment inventory management application is used for managing off-line network equipment.” The present invention realizes the shortcomings of the conventional network management systems and provides for an integral management viewpoint covering on-line and off-line asset items. For example, in the embodiment in claim 1, the present invention includes a physical asset manager to create an informational link between the on-line sub-object of the asset item and the off-line sub-object of the asset item.

Furthermore, the Melby reference is not prior art to the present invention. The Melby reference was filed on October 2000, and claims priority as a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 09/441,289 filed Nov. 16, 1999, U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/166,042 filed Nov. 17, 1999, U.S. application Ser. No. 09/503,671 filed Feb. 14, 2000, U.S. application Ser. No. 09/504,000 filed Feb. 14, 2000, U.S. application Ser. No. 09/504,343 filed Feb. 14, 2000, and U.S. application Ser. No. 09/653,735 filed September 1, 2000, and provisional application No. 60/166,042 filed on November 17, 1999. Since Applicants can not view these prior parent applications or provisional, it is not clear if the Melby patent is entitled to

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**CONCLUSION**

For the above reasons, the foregoing amendment places the Application in condition for allowance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of the claims be withdrawn and full allowance granted. Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, please contact Jessica Smith at (972) 477-9109.

Respectfully submitted,

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